[148 cont.]

769 778 as duka, and a cult is dedicated to them. This worship is continued for some time, but only if the spirit has proved by means of cures, favorable harvests, and the like that it is malete, that is, possesses special power. Probably it is only after such manifestations of power, or in the case of particularly influential personalities soon after death, that the duka post is erected in the men's house. It is made from a certain tree, with which the spirit apparently is thought to have a special connection. The post is carved with decorations, its completion is announced by [534] [535] [782] blowing the triton horn, and a great dance celebration is held, A pig is slaughtered, and the filets, along with other food, are sacrificed, that is to say, laid in front of the post, but soon removed and eaten. During the celebration, which lasts several days, prayers for wealth, good harvests, etc. are addressed to the spirit. On the last day, leaves of the tree from which the [755] post was made are placed in the water, on the next morning, even before sunrise, another meeting takes place, and the water is then regarded as curative. Similar celebrations take place when the post is renewed. This does not happen very often, however, for frequently an old duka is neglected or forgotten with the advent of a new one imbued with much malete (4).

4. Codrington, p. 139. O'Ferrall, pp. 228f.

756 Every duka vouchsafes a man its special relations and support through the intercession of which one can influence the spirit for good or evil. Such a sorcerer is called meduka. As a rule he is a member of the family of the deceased, but [149] this is definitely confirmed in only one particular instance, that is, if a young child dies, the father becomes its meduka and announces his new position to the people by appearing in public in the company of another meduka (1). One of the principal functions of

1. Codrington, pp. 196, 201. O'Ferrall, pp. 223ff. Cf. also Joest in Baessler, p. 388.

[149 cont.]
the meduka, as everywhere, is the healing of sickness, which here, too, is in large part traced back to sorcery. If one wishes to kill someone, he tries to obtain a bit of leftover food, an article of clothing, some hair, or the like from him, which he then takes to the spirit hut and casts a spell upon it; sometimes it is tossed into the sea or buried. Belief in this sorcery exists in all parts of the group. If a meduka is summoned to a sick person, he waits until the spirit takes possession of him, which is apparently manifested by convulsive movements, and then announces the cause of the illness and its remedy. Sometimes the cure consists of a bitter drink squeezed out of certain leaves, or of the application of certain herbs on the painful spot. It is not the natural properties of the herbs that brings about the cure, however, but the malete inherent in them. In other cases the doctor prescribes the sacrifice of a pig that is immediately consumed communally in the spirit house amidst "prayers." The meduka places a small piece in front of the spirit-post and asks for the help of the duka for the patient. This piece, too, is then eaten; only small boys may not eat any of it. Often a sick person has "been shot" by a spirit; then the shot of the duka, a few small pebbles or a splinter of wood, must be removed from the body. Edge-Partington gives an illustration of a spirit-figure, taluna, which is supposed to protect the sick from death. If the patient dies despite the treatment, a spirit with greater malete is always involved, over which the meduka has no influence, or the helpful spirit is asleep. After a successful cure, a pig is sacrificed, and the helpful duka again receives a small piece, that is, its spiritual part, for the piece itself is always consumed by the participants soon after the sacrifice is offered. The meduka receives remuneration for his help (2).

2. Joest, ibid., p. 377. Codrington, pp. 196f. O'Ferrall, pp. 223, 226, 230. Edge-Partington, I, 163, No. 1.